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FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1607

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 000951

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL RU GG

SUBJECT: GEORGIA: SHOOT OUT WITH AT-LARGE MUTINY SUSPECTS  
LEAVES ONE DEAD, TWO INJURED

REF: A. TBILISI 852

1B. TBILISI 857

1C. TBILISI 866

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT, REASON: 1.4 (B,D).

1.(U) SUMMARY: The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) held a press conference on May 21 to confirm that the three suspects that remained at large for their role in the May 5 mutiny at Mukhravani military base (reftels) had been apprehended or killed. Following a shoot out between the police and the three in a Tbilisi suburb, Gia Krialashvili was killed, and two others, Levan Amiridze and Koba Otanadze, were injured and are now in police custody at a Tbilisi hospital. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) After the military mutiny was peacefully put down on May 5, three of the organizers, Krialashvili, Amiridze, and Otanadze managed to escape into the forest surrounding the Mukhravani military base near Tbilisi. Since May 5, the Government has set up police points on specific roads leading from Georgian into South Ossetian controlled territory, as well as wanted posters throughout Tbilisi and its outskirts in hopes of catching the three. The Government also offered a GEL 200,000 (USD 122,700) reward for information on Otanadze's whereabouts, as well as a GEL 50,000 (USD 30,675) reward for information on the other two. The Georgian Government believes Otanadze to be one of the key organizers of the mutiny, and therefore his capture is significant for the investigation. (Note: Otanadze and Krialashvili, former military and MOIA officers, also organized the 2001 mutiny attempt against former President Shevardnadze at the same Mukhravani base. Amiridze is an active duty colonel in the Georgian Army. End Note.)

13. (SBU) According to the MOIA's statement, Krialashvili, Amiridze and Otanadze put up armed resistance to the police, which led to the fire fight. Post does not believe that any police were injured in the fight, but we do not have MOIA confirmation at this point. Krialashvili was killed in the fight, while Amiridze and Otanadze are hospitalized in reportedly stable condition.

14. (C) COMMENT: Since the May 5 event, the government has focused manpower and resources on capturing those who remained at-large for their role in the mutiny against the government. While we do not have additional details of the firefight at this time, the government undoubtedly hopes that the capture of Otanadze will help connect the dots on the planning and attempted execution of the May 5 plot. END COMMENT.

TEFFT